

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON - An international forum on the future of Afghanistan will be convened by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, in partnership with The George Washington University Law School, on Wednesday, January 29. Participants will discuss how the protection of religious freedom and other human rights can be incorporated into Afghanistan's new constitution, judicial system, and laws; how tolerance can be instilled in a society which has known enmity and war for the last thirty years; and what the United States can do to assist.

Prominent Afghan and U.S. government officials, along with experts on religious freedom, human rights, Islamic law, judicial reform, and rule of law, will address these issues in a day-long event. Confirmed speakers and panelists include Zalmay Khalilzad, Special Presidential Envoy to Afghanistan and Ambassador-at-Large to Free Iraqis, Wendy Chamberlin, USAID Assistant Administrator for Asia and Near East, Amb. Karl F. Inderfurth, Professor of the Practice of International Affairs, the Elliott School, The George Washington University, and former Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs (1997-2001), Peter Tomsen, former U.S. Special Envoy to the Afghan Resistance, Mavis Leno, Chair, Feminist Majority's Campaign for Afghan Women and Girls, and Sima Wali, President of Refugee Women in Development. Among the participants from Afghanistan are members of the Transitional Islamic Government of Afghanistan, including Abdul Rahim Karimi, Minister of Justice, Bahauddin Baha, Chairman of the Judicial Reform Commission, Musa Maroofi, member of the Constitutional Drafting Committee, and Ms. Hanagama Anwari and Mohammad Farid Hamidi, members of the National Human Rights Commission.

What: International Forum, "Reconstructing Afghanistan: Freedom in Crisis";

When: Wednesday, January 29, 2003, 9:00am - 5:00pm

Where: The George Washington University Media Center (set of CNN's Crossfire), 805 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC, 9:00am - 12:00pm

GWU Law School, Rooms TBA, 12:30pm - 5:00pm

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

Felice D. Gaer
- Dean Michael K. Young